Validation and Application of Aberrant Behaviour Assessment Checklist in Telugu Language and Studies on Interventions at Lebenshilfe
(A Special School for the Mentally Handicapped)

By

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Research Guide

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SYNOPSIS

Introduction:

Special education is the education of students with special needs in a way that addresses the students' individual differences and needs. Ideally this process involves the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures adapted equipment and materials accessible settings and other interventions designed to help learners with special needs achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school and community than would be available if the students were only given access to a typical classroom education.

Common special needs include challenges with learning, communication challenges, emotional and behavioural disorders, physical disabilities and developmental disorders. Students with these kinds of special needs are likely to benefit from additional educational services such as different approaches to teaching, use of technology, a specifically adapted teaching area or resource room.

Typically, a psychologist (or psychiatrist) qualified to judge whether behaviour is normal or abnormal does not get involved in that decision at the beginning. Usually someone's behaviour has already been judged abnormal by one or more friends, family members or co-workers before they are consulted. What does that mean? Consider the following. Some person close to the subject may follow a course of behaviour that after a while puts him/ her in a state of constant anger, fear, or anxiety. The person would then want to call in a professional to see whether a label should be placed on this person's pattern of

behaviour. If a label can be found, the person would feel justified in trying to persuade that person to accept treatment that would try to change his or her behaviour back to normal.

Judgment of abnormality is complex but important in several ways. For instance, in a job situation, the person first needs to know what others think is normal behaviour. Abnormal behaviour at work can have serious results not only for the persons involved but for those dependent on him or her for support. A number of different sets of factors -- individual, environmental and societal -- must be brought to bear in diagnosing someone's behaviour as "abnormal." Though infrequent, abnormal behaviour reflecting mental illness does occur.

Need and Significance of the Study:

People with intellectual disability are known to present behaviour disorder in a larger proportion than the general population. Since such problems reduce the chances for community integration and access to educational, leisure and occupational activities (Rojahn & Helsel, 1991), it is essential to be able to evaluate those challenging behaviours. The greatest difficulty for the educational staff involves the management of disruptive behaviours, which are a source of stress for training teams, the families and the residents themselves. However, no rating instruments assessing behaviour disorder exist at the moment in Telugu language.

The interest of Indian educators for psychological assessment tools is at the origin of an international exchange that has started a specific collaboration

linked to the reality on the ground. Their interest was mainly directed to a fast and effective way to assess behavioural disorders that constitute a major problem in their daily care activity (Varisco, Kempf- Constantin Lehotkay et al. 2009). To quantify and qualify behavioural troubles, the Aberrant Behaviour Checklist scale (ABC, Aman, Singh, Stewart et al., 1985 a and b, 1987, 1995) is a remarkable assessment tool, easily applicable and especially allowing for the observation of possible improvements in time (Galli Carminati, Constantine Schaya et al., 2004). The sensitivity areas of the ABC for an Indian population with intellectual disability have already been discussed, we can mention: aggression, self-mutilation, destructive behaviour, grasping behaviour, motor stereotypes, echolalia and stereotyped language, hyperactivity and irritability. From the relational point of view, one must also add dysfunction in social relations, inhibition, often isolation and inappropriate sexual behaviour.

The purpose of this investigation was to enable educators of the Lebenshilfe Institute to express a personal judgment to measure success or failure in their care, while taking into account the efforts being deployed for its success. This allows investigating and preventing possible exhaustion of the educational team and asking questions about the effectiveness of the strategies adapted so far.

Objectives of the Present Study:

1. To validate the Aberrant Behaviour Checklist in Telugu language, means to evaluate the factor structure and the psychometric characteristics of this version. The researcher postulates the factor

structure of this Telugu version to be comparable to the original English version. Concerning the reliability, the translated ABC will present a good internal consistency in its items and subscales and a good inter-rater reliability. Test-re-test reliability.

2. To determine if a relationship exists between the level of skills (PEP-R) of a person with intellectual disability and the severity of the challenging behaviours (ABC). In addition, to investigate whether a relationship is present between the behavioural disorders (ABC) and the self-evaluation of the educators on the satisfaction and effectiveness of their care (VAS).
3. To study the influence of various intervention strategies adapted at Lebenshilfe for training and educating the mentally retarded individuals.

Chapterisation:

Chapter I, entitled Introduction presents a brief background conceptualisation on special education, behaviour problems, abnormal behaviour and the need for its assessment. It presents a brief description about the Lebenshilfe institute where the research had been carried out. Finally need for the study, objectives of the study and limitations of the study were presented.

Chapter II entitled Review of Related Literature presents the research carried out in the field of special education, inclusive education and particularly with the works related to mental retardation, abnormal behaviour.

Research Methodology is presented in Chapter III. This chapter basically describes the methods and strategies chosen for the study.

Chapter IV is titled as Validation and Application of Aberrant Behaviour Assessment Checklist in Telugu Language. It explains all the methods, assessments and validation and deals with the determination of a relationship existing between the level of skills (PEP-R) of a person with intellectual disability and the severity of the challenging behaviours.

Chapter V deals with Studies on Interventions Techniques and their influence on the aberrant behaviour. This chapter presents the strategies used at Lebenshilfe and the outcomes of the interventions.

Chapter VI deals with conclusions, generalisations and suggestions for further study.

Bibliography and Annexure are given at the end.

Significance from the Review of Related Literature:

The existing behavioural assessment tools in the Indian setting continue to serve a useful purpose. However, the following observations on the existing behavioural assessment scales/checklists available for use with mentally handicapped persons in our country are very important. 1) Most of these tools/checklists do not elicit complete and comprehensive information of the current level of both, skill behaviours as well as problem behaviours and emphasis is laid more on the assessment of skill behaviours alone. 2) Some of the items included in these tools/checklists are not behaviourally worded. 3) Some of the scales fail to provide objective and clear instructions on administration of each item. 4) Some of these scales or checklists lack a material kit to be used while making objective behavioural assessments of each child with mental handicap. 5) Almost all the existing behavioural assessment tools lack quantitative measures of observed performance. 6) All the existing behavioural assessment tools do not have a glossary to give clear instructions on administration of each item. 7) All the existing assessment tools do not include record booklet for maintaining a record of the detailed performance of each child over time. 8) For the behaviour assessment tools mentioned earlier, information on the technical aspects, such as, reliability, validity, field-testing, standardisation details, etc., are not available or known so far.

Keeping in view of the above-mentioned observations, an attempt is made to develop and apply the **Aberrant Behaviour Assessment Checklist in Telugu Language** to meet the requirement of the research and local people.

Methodology:

Aberrant Behaviour Checklist's Validation in Telugu

The sample of the present study consists of children, adolescents and adults with intellectual disability supported by the Lebenshilfe institution in Visakhapatnam. Then, out of the 415 persons living in the Lebenshilfe institution, 77 persons with mild, 205 persons with moderate and 133 persons with severe to profound intellectual disability i.e 338 persons were chosen to be evaluated in the present study

Validation process of the ABC English version was done in two stages (Aman et al., 1985a). Eight institutions were involved in the project. No ambulatory and blind residents were included in the study. In the first stage, 465 residents were rated with the first version which contained 125 items. To focus on a more homogeneous population, persons with a mild intellectual disability were excluded. Subjects on whom forms were not adequately filled out were also dropped, leaving 418 subjects. Behavioural items that were rated less than 10% were then dropped from the scale, leaving 100 items.

In the second stage, 585 residents were rated with this 100-item version. Applying the same exclusion criteria, that is blind and no ambulatory persons and those with a mild intellectual disability, the sample constituted of 509 subjects. Following factor analysis of the 100 items, 76 items for an intermediate scale were retained.

Application of ABC Checklist – Relationship between Staff's Satisfaction regarding Caring, Challenging Behavior and Psycho-Educational Profile (PEP-R) in a Population with Intellectual Disabilities

The purpose of this application is to investigate the relationship between challenging behaviours, the feelings of satisfaction of educators relative to the care process and the perception of the effectiveness of the care of people with ID. In addition, the researcher investigated the relationship between challenging behaviours and skill levels of people with ID.

Methodology for Studies on Interventions at Lebenshilfe:

The Case studies mentioned in Chapter VI are individualised and based on the years of observation and implantation of interventions, the success cases, which are scientifically monitored and recorded are presented

Various intervention strategies are being implemented for over 400 inmates at Lebenshilfe School for the mentally retarded. Some of these techniques are innovated and some are adapted from expert strategies developed in countries like Germany, France, Switzerland, etc.. They were put to practice on day-to-day basis for behaviour modification of the mentally retarded individuals. Along with the researcher (founder and director of the institute), many parents, psychologists, special education teachers, trained professionals, helpers, family members, etc. participated and implemented these therapies over a course of time and the behaviour modifications are observed, recorded, analysed and acknowledged.

SUMMARY:

Special education is the education of students with special needs in a way that addresses the students' individual differences and needs. Ideally, this process involves the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, accessible settings, and other interventions designed to help learners with special needs achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school and community than would be available if the student were only given access to a typical classroom education.

Common special needs include challenges with learning, communication challenges, emotional and behavioural disorders, physical disabilities and developmental disorders. Students with these kinds of special needs are likely to benefit from additional educational services such as different approaches to teaching, use of technology, a specifically adapted teaching area or resource room.

Intellectual giftedness is a difference in learning and can also benefit from specialized teaching techniques or different educational programs, but the term "special education" is generally used to specifically indicate instruction of students whose special needs reduce their ability to learn independently or in an ordinary classroom, and gifted education is handled separately.

In most developed countries, educators are modifying teaching methods and environments so that the maximum number of students is served in general education environments. Special education in developed countries is often

regarded less as a "place" and more as "a range of services, available in every school." Integration can reduce social stigmas and improve academic achievement for many students.

Some children are easily identified as candidates for special needs from their medical history. They may have been diagnosed with a genetic condition that is associated with mental retardation, may have various forms of brain damage, may have a development disorder, may have visual or hearing disabilities, or other disabilities.

Among students whose identification is less obvious, such as students with learning difficulties, two primary methods have been used for identifying them: the discrepancy model and the response to intervention model. The discrepancy model depends on the teacher noticing that the students' achievements are noticeably below what is expected. Response to intervention model advocates earlier intervention.

In the discrepancy model, a student receives special educational services for a specific learning difficulty (SLD) if and only if the student has at least normal intelligence and the student's academic achievement is below what is expected of a student with his or her IQ

Major Findings:

Validation of Aberrant Behaviour Assessment Checklist Translated into Telugu language:

This work is basically a trans-cultural validation of a standardized tool and one has to check the correctness of the translated tool structure compared

with the original version. The construct validity indicates how well the instrument allows to measure the construct as it is defined by the reference theoretical framework (Vallerand, 1989). There are three ways to examine it: the test structure, convergent and divergent aspects compared with other instruments, and the effects of the psychological construct. In this study, the test structure, that is its factor structure were analyzed. Te researcher is limited in the convergence analysis since there is no other instrument assessing behavior disorders at the moment in Telugu language.

To confirm the factor validity of our Telugu version, the researcher checked its factor structure in comparing it with the original version's. Rating data was analyzed for the whole sample by the same procedure as that used in the original study to confirm the factor structure and psychometric characteristics of the ABC. Factor analysis was conducted using the principal factoring method with iteration, followed by varimax rotation.

Reliability analysis of a questionnaire informs on its accuracy, whatever it measures. In other words, a reliable psychological test always evaluates the psychological construct the same way, whatever the construct. Among different reliability types, the following were checked:

1. Internal consistency was estimated by Cronbach's alpha. An index higher or equal to 0.75 is satisfactory
2. Interrater reliability. Fifty subjects were rated by a pair of raters to confirm interrater reliability, which will be tested by Kappa coefficient. Subgoup

constitution an its size are conform to validation process of the original instrument (Aman et al., 1985a, 1985b; 1994)

3. Test-retest reliability. Fifty subjects were rated twice with an interval of 4 weeks independently by the same staff member to confirm test-retest reliability. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient will be calculated for each factor

In the Application of ABC tool, the identified correlations show a link between relational and emotional skills and challenging behaviours related to the isolation of the individual. Indeed, motor stereotypes are an obstacle to the relationship with the others because they cause the person to withdraw into himself. However, it is precisely noted that the more the relational skills are present, the less the isolation behaviours arise.

Conclusions:

The basic aim of this research is to accelerate the process of development of teaching and training methodologies and teaching learning materials working with mentally handicapped children, parents at home and professionals at the schools in their own Mother Tongue without any interference from an unknown language so that they will be no misunderstanding or misinterpretations in application. Also it gives no scope for carrying any misconceptions so that there will be a clear and unclouded understanding among them. The information and data gathered from different world conferences, libraries, workshops, symposia, constant consultations with eminent and reputed visiting centers and special schools after the conference.

Experts in this field yielded an enormous amount of data. This information had to be carefully shifted and analyzed. The descriptive and analytical approach has been adopted for this study. Notice had to be taken of the time frame and periodicity of the events that had a bearing on Lebenshilfe. Outwardly this is a research work of just two to three years but inwardly it is a practical research experience of the investigator from 1980 onwards till to date. From such an effort of reconstruction a synthesis has been attempted aiming at a comprehensive picture of this subject under study. Descriptive analysis and practical experimentation made this research possible. So this study has been a historic, descriptive, analytical and practical account of 33 years of Lebenshilfe.

It is observed from the research that catering to the needs of persons having mental retardation requires special care and assistance both from the family and the society. Strong motivational support is needed for the family members and the institutes offering courses and therapies should be strongly supported by Government, Quasi and Non-Governmental organizations and more particularly from the people of the society. Unless the society upholds these individuals, it is difficult for any organization to cater to the needs of these people.

On one side, assessment of the status of the people suffering should be done scientifically with valid instruments and remedial therapies should be provided for them.

The individuals with mental retardation need special attention and care. Even though a number of studies are mentioned, every individual is a special case and the person needs special care and the techniques used for assessment, medication and improvement should be highly individualized and unique.

Implications

The practical way to address the issues in the field with the ID people would be to work on the occupational activities and on the understanding of social interaction. However, to achieve this, the researcher must be able to establish a contact with the patient, find a way to communicate with him and thus, with the support of assessment tools such as PEP-R and ABC, specifically address his problems and needs. It is observed that challenging behaviours are greater in people with poor language skills and poor quality of social interactions. In agreement with our suggestion, Kevan (2003) also shows in his meta-analysis that expressive communication skills in people with ID and behavioural disorders must be promoted for: this can be done through targeted exercises to enhance the skills of the person with ID, or by changing the communication environment (e.g. the staff adapts communication by reducing the oral component and increasing the non-verbal one, using a visual program with pictograms, pictures, etc.).

This thesis presents the success stories of many interventions practiced at Lebenshilfe in training and instructing the mentally retarded individuals and in making them independent to live a life. The activities helped individuals from severe mental retardation to educable and trainable individuals.

Limitations of the Study:

All the studies for this research were carried out and adopted at Lebenshilfe school by a team of highly committed, trained and motivated individuals under the guidance and supervision of the researcher, Mrs. T. Saraswati Devi for enhancing the quality of life to the mentally retarded children. The research was in collaboration with the Department of Psychology and Para-Psychology Andhra University and Psychiatric Unit of Mental Development (Unité de Psychiatrie du Développement Mental, UPDM) – Division of Mental Health and Psychiatrie – Geneva University Hospitals and University of Geneva, Switzerland

This study laid foundation for the assessment of aberrant behaviour and its application in a native context suitable to the state of Andhra Pradesh. Each part of the whole country needs to be supplied with such type of tools to assess the individuals and the tools need to be available in the local languages for the effective use of the psychologists and social workers. Research should be continued to translate these tools into other Indian languages and even to the local dialects, where people can use to identify the individuals with mental retardation and other psychological problems.